

KATHERINE SMITH

History

A young girl whispers on her cell phone at night,
her voice rising, falling in the arc that spans

reason, anger, grief until she puts the phone
under her pillow so that no one hears her

weep. From my bedroom I hear her cries in dark
where no one sleeps. Once we painted her room

a pink so pale it's invisible at night. Wind rustles
bare branches of the apple tree. Hours before

when I drove her home, she talked about biology,
new shoes, a book she was reading. We walked

into the house beneath stars that pinned endless dark to the sky
like the posters I'd helped her fix to the ceiling. When I was a child,

each night I pulled pillows over my head to keep from hearing
my parents' voices and the sound of the television's terrible news

turned up loud to muffle the sound of their fighting. Tonight
I slip outside to breathe in the cold bark of the apple trees.

In the dark, my daughter's voice follows me.